

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 8-17 are now present in the application. Claims 8-17 have been added. Claims 1-7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claim 8 is independent. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. §119

Applicant has submitted a certified copy of priority document on September 29, 2003. The Examiner did not acknowledge Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119. Acknowledgement of the claim for priority and receipt of the certified priority document are requested in the next Office Action.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, claims 1-7 have been cancelled and replaced with claims 8-17 to address the Examiner's requested changes. Accordingly, claims 8-17 should now be definite and clear. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Morris, U.S. Patent No. 4,012,155. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. As the Examiner will note, independent claim 8 has been written to recite “an external cylindrical member” and “an internal cylindrical member” that are “spaced apart from” one another, wherein the external cylindrical member has a “side perimeter wall with at least one hinged member.” Both the external cylindrical member and internal cylindrical member are mounted on the terminal end. Applicant respectfully submits that the above combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 8 is not disclosed nor suggested by the references relied on by the Examiner.

Morris discloses a snap lock connector including an elongate male member and a separate female member, one of which contains a longitudinal cut out allowing expansion and contraction. In particular, Morris teaches the male member and the female member being separate components (see the different embodiments of FIGS. 2 and 9 of Morris). Morris fails to teach two cylindrical members wherein both members are mounted onto a terminal end and spaced apart, as recited in independent claim 8.

In particular, Morris' first embodiment (see FIGS. 2-5 of Morris) discloses a male member containing a longitudinal cut out allowing for expansion and contraction. When the male member is inserted into the female member, the expandable and contractable male member is inside of the female member. Since independent claim 8 recites a hinged

member on the perimeter wall of an external cylindrical member, Morris' first embodiment does not anticipate independent claim 8.

Furthermore, in Morris' second embodiment (see FIGS. 7-9 of Morris), the female member contains a longitudinal cut out allowing for expansion and contraction. When the male member is inserted into the female member, the expandable female member surrounds and is in contact with the male member. Since independent claim 8 discloses an internal cylindrical member spaced from an external cylindrical member, Morris' second embodiment does not anticipate independent claim 8. Therefore, Morris fails to teach an internal cylindrical member and an external cylindrical member, both mounted to the terminal end, in which the external cylindrical member has a "side perimeter wall with at least one hinged member" and in which an internal cylindrical member is "spaced apart from and inside said external cylindrical member."

Since Morris fails to teach each and every limitation of independent claim 8, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 8 clearly defines over the teachings of the utilized prior art. Dependent claims 9-17 further distinguish the present invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 are respectfully requested. Favorable consideration and allowance the application are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state of the prior art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Joe McKinney Muncy, Registration No. 32,334 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

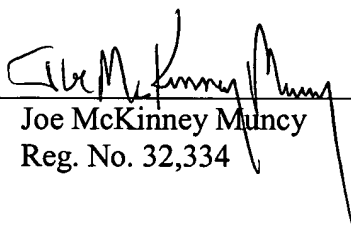
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant respectfully petitions for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$450.00 is attached herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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